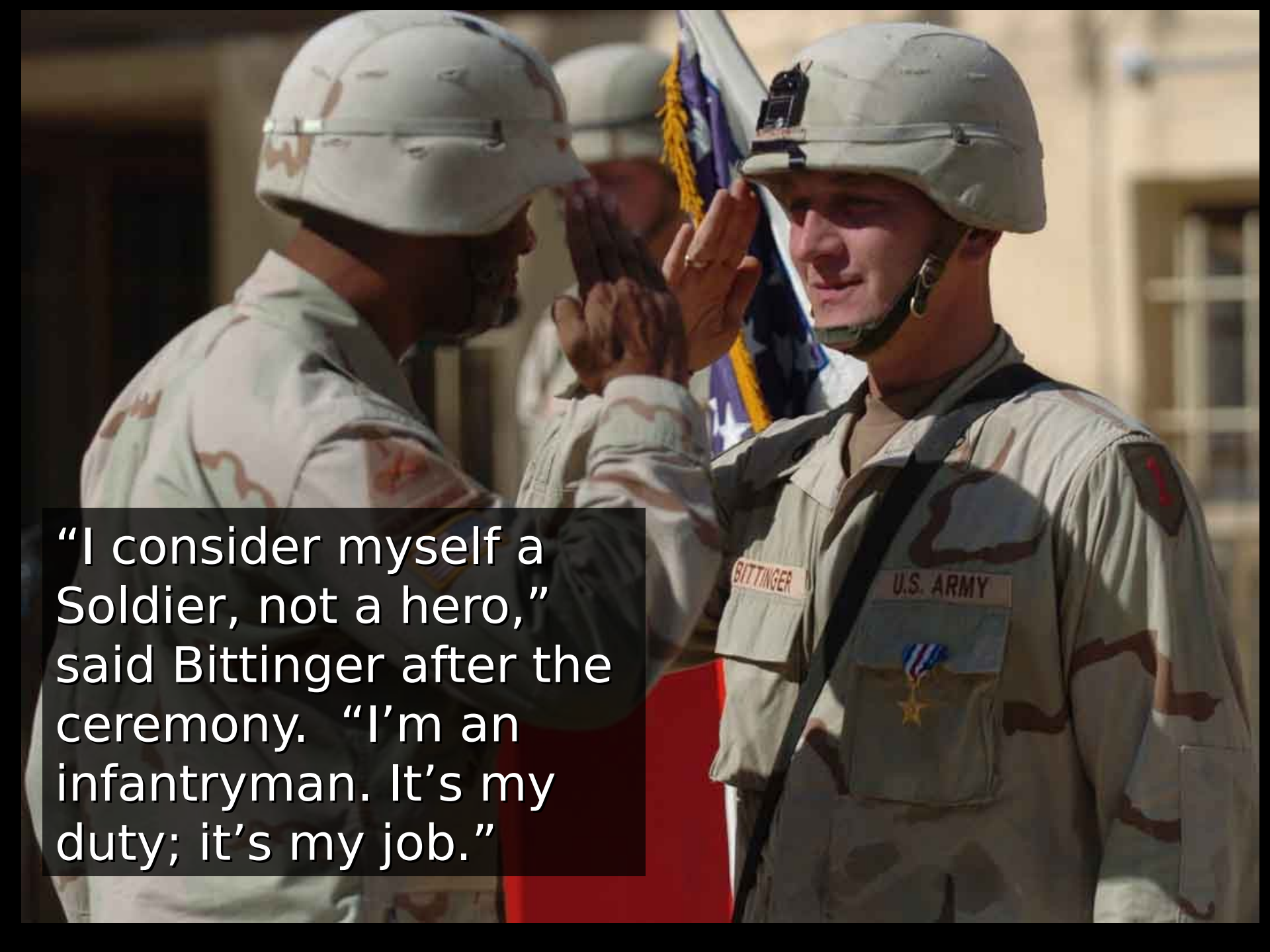




Maj. Gen. John R.S. Batiste pins a Silver Star with Valor medal on **Staff Sgt. Raymond Bittinger**, 2nd Bat., 2nd Inf. Reg. attached to the 1st Battalion, 6th Field Artillery at Forward Operating Base Gabe near Baqubah on July 19. Bittinger was awarded the medal for his actions against Anti-Iraqi Forces and for protecting and saving the lives of Multi-National Forces in Baqubah and Buhritz on April 9.



Lt. Col. Steven Bullimore, Task Force 1-6 Commander presided over the ceremony. “As Americans, we love our heroes,” he said. “We wonder in our heart of hearts what it is that makes them. In the example of **Staff Sgt. Ray Bitteringer**, two things stand out. First, he has always been good at what he does. Second is the simple selflessness of a true professional.”



“I consider myself a Soldier, not a hero,” said Bittinger after the ceremony. “I’m an infantryman. It’s my duty; it’s my job.”